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C O N F I D E N T I A L YEREVAN 000145

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR EUR/CACEN

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TAGS: PARM KNNP PREL IR EU AORC AM

SUBJECT: ARMENIA STILL NOT WILLING TO JEOPARDIZE RELATIONS

WITH IRAN

REF: A) STATE 16171 B) YEREVAN 130 C) YEREVAN 127

Classified By: DCM A.F. Godfrey for reasons 1.4 (b,d).

**¶11.** (C) We delivered ref A points and P5 plus 2 statement on Iran to Ministry of Foreign Affairs International Organizations Department Head Valery Mkrtumyan. "We understand Russia's position and we understand your position," Mkrtumyan said, "but Iran is our neighbor and a close trading partner." Mkrtumyan said that any detailed response to the points would come after a high-level GOAM delegation (led by Presidential Chief of Staff Artashes Tumanyan and including Minister of Energy Armen Movsisyan and Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Arman Kirakossian) returned from Tehran on February 2. (Note: The delegation departed for Iran on January 29 for one of a series of long-planned Iran-Armenia Joint Economic Commission meetings (ref C). End Note.)

**¶12.** (C) Comment: With a major energy crisis narrowly averted here following the January 22 explosions in North Ossetia (ref B), Armenian officials are renewing efforts to diversify their energy supply, a goal that unfortunately has the potential to stimulate the already-existing Armenian-Iranian courtship. Once the Joint Economic Commission returns on February 2, we intend to probe for indications of growing ties, and will repeat earlier points.

EVANS